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Bangalore Mirror

TEMP Max 28 | Min 14 | Humidity 28% Mostly cloudy Sensex 84,273 | Nifty 25,935 | Gold 1,57,614 | Silver 2,59,500 | Dollar 90.58 | Euro 107.89 | GBP 123.78

PRICE WE PAY

Even with health insurance, families face financial burdens during medical emergencies due to expenses excluded from coverage

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FOR THE RECORD

New Zealand dominate UAE; Namibia's 156 'not enough' to stop Netherlands; Pakistan spinners keep USA in check

PAGE 7

As Greater Bengaluru Authority settles in, process of handing out identity cards and certificates to street vendors has come to a halt, putting them at risk of eviction and loss of livelihood

RED TAPE CUTS INTO RIGHT TO LIVELIHOOD

Survey identified 27,000 street vendors in city, but unions say actual number is closer to 1 lakh

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"For us, this transition has meant only trouble. They say the system is changing, but until it changes, we are the ones paying the price. If we are removed even for a day, we lose our entire income —Fruit vendor

Eviction and harassment of street vendors in Bengaluru has exposed deep administrative gaps in the city's efforts to protect informal workers, with many vendors saying they are being unfairly targeted amid a bureaucratic transition.

City officials are in the midst of replacing the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) with a new administrative body, the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA). But vendors and worker advocates say the changeover has created a legal and operational vacuum that has left thousands without valid identity cards and certificates that would protect their right to sell goods. Without the documents that prove their legal status, many vendors now live in fear of eviction or police action.

"After the GBA was formed, a Town Vending Committee (TVC) was to be constituted since the term of the previously appointed committee had come to an end. Along with this, the distribution of identity cards to vendors is yet to take place. In the West zone, the distribution began on Monday. However, the other zones are yet to get any relief," Vinay Sreenivasa, an advocate with the street vendors union, told Bangalore Mirror. He also stressed that an orientation programme must be held for

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4 >>

History neglected

Kargada Kunte is historically important spot in Cubbon Park, but just 4 years after it was developed by BSCL, it lies in ruins today

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The pathetic condition of the Kargada Kunte, a historic pond in Cubbon Park, reveals that the authorities do not care about the quality of developmental works. The Bengaluru Smart City Limited (BSCL) had taken up development of Karagada Kunte in 2021. The historical pond was also developed by the Department of Horticulture and Public Works Department in 2012.

Many people who visit Cubbon Park said the pond now looks like an abandoned waterbody in a remote rural area. Granite steps on the western side of the lake are in dilapidated condition and most of them have collapsed.

Cubbon Park Walkers' Association president S Umesh blamed the horticulture department officials for this situation. "They just make money but are not bothered about Cubbon Park. I have already complained to them about the pathetic condition of Karagada Kunte. I demand the authorities reconstruct the marble steps without any delay," Umesh said.

Suresh Jayaram, an author of Bangalore's Lalbagh: A Chronicle of the Garden and the City, suggested that the authorities implement sustainable measures to ensure there is water in the pond. "Karagada Kunte

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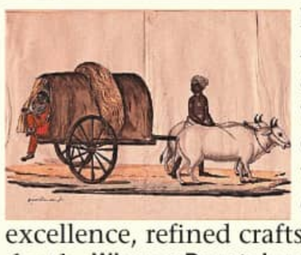
THINGS TO DO

01 Brush with history



Mumbai-based Todywalla Auctions are presenting a preview show of soon to be auctioned artworks on display, showcasing the best of Indian Art, distinguished by material excellence, refined craftsmanship and historical depth. **Where: Bangalore International Centre (BIC), Domlur; When: Feb 13 from 2 pm to 7 pm, Feb 14, 15 from 10 am to 7 pm**

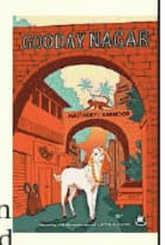
02 No strings attached

At Loco Lane, love isn't just complicated, it's officially cancelled. No roses. No awkward candlelight dinners. Just high-energy games, unapologetic fun, and large groups celebrating friendship, freedom, and chaos—done the luxury way. **Where: Loco Lane, Ashok Nagar; When: February 14, 5 pm**

03 Crafted with care

A Hundred Hands, a handmade movement rooted in livelihood, equity, and craft integrity, with a single-minded focus on handcrafted work alone, is bringing the Festival of Handmade. **Where: NIFT Campus, HSR Layout; When: February 11 to 15, 11 am to 8 pm**

04 Wit and wonder



Acclaimed writer and translator Maithreyi Karnoor will be in conversation with Aravind Jayan, for the launch of 'Gooday Nagar', a dazzling collection that reimagines everyday Indian life through humour, strangeness, and quiet philosophical wit. **Where: Beku, JP Nagar; When: Feb 15, 12 pm**

05 Musical voyage

Vocalist and songwriter Violetta Parisini, known for creating music that speaks across language through vulnerability, lyricism, and depth, will be performing live with her band. **Where: Windmills Craftworks, Whitefield; When: February 13 and 14, 9.30 pm**

Two new ant species march into spotlight

Researchers discover two new army ant species in Eastern Ghats, highlighting region's immense biodiversity and need for deeper exploration and stronger conservation efforts

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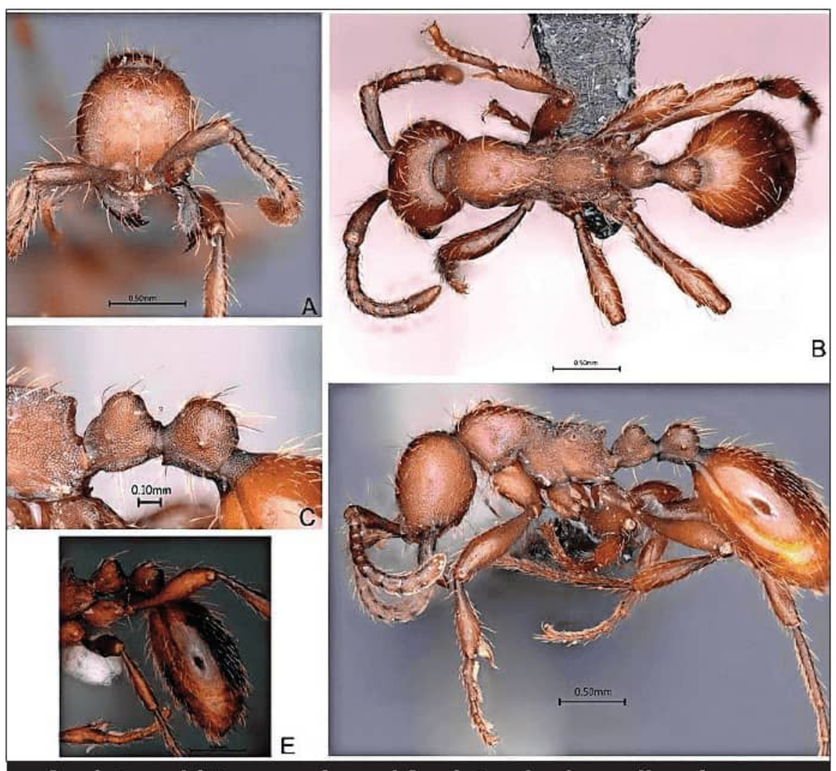
The Eastern Ghats are finally stepping out of the shadow of the Western Ghats, proving they are a biological goldmine rather than just a rugged trail. In a landmark discovery, researchers have identified two new species of nomadic army ants; Aenictus chittoorensis and Aenictus lankamallensis in the deciduous forests of Andhra Pradesh. This find is particularly special because it highlights the overlooked diversity of a mountain range that has long been undersampled by scientists. As keystone predators, these ants act as the forest's natural vacuum cleaners, regulating insect populations and maintaining the delicate balance of the tropical ecosystem.

Forest enforcers

"Ants are a biodiversity study model. Due to their massive, organised colonies of up to 2 million individuals, they are vital for studying collective intelligence, social behaviour, and evolutionary biology," explained Manjunath S Nayak, biodiversity researcher from Gadag. Sahanashree, entomologist at ATREE, Bengaluru, said that the discovery of the two new ant species from the Eastern Ghats underscores the overlooked diversity of the army ant genus Aenictus in peninsular India, with each species representing distinct species groups. Bikash Sahoo from NISER, Odisha, stated that the Eastern Ghats have received far less scientific attention as compared to the Western Ghats. "Our discovery of these two new army ant species shows that this landscape holds immense biodiversity and underscores the need for greater exploration and conservation efforts," he noted.



Aenictus chittoorensis and Aenictus lankamallensis were discovered is deciduous forests of Andhra Pradesh

Discovery of Aenictus chittoorensis and Aenictus lankamallensis from Eastern Ghats underscores overlooked diversity of army ant genus Aenictus in peninsular India, says entomologist

Nomadic raids

Unlike common garden ants that often form fixed nests, ants belonging to the Aenictus species are fierce nomads that forgo permanent nests, instead forming 'bivouacs'. These are temporary structures built entirely out of their own interlocking bodies, which are mobile and can even expand and contract based on colony size and requirements. Their mass-foraging raids are so intense that they drive out other insects, inadvertently providing a feast for local birds and lizards. One of the new species was found specifically in the Sri Lankamalleswara Wildlife Sanctuary, a habitat rich in rare flora like Red Sandalwood and Beddome's Cycas, proving that where rare plants grow, rare predators follow.

European owl makes a pitstop

Short-eared owl (Asio flammeus), a migratory species typically hailing from Europe and Central Asia, was spotted at Gajendragad Hill recently. This medium-sized predator, weighing between 200g and 475g, is a visual marvel with its oversized head, striking large eyes, and broad wingspan. Known for its distinct black beak and earthy brown plumage, the owl has become a local sensation among birdwatchers and researchers alike. Biodiversity researchers highlighted that these feathered visitors are more than just a pretty sight; they are a boon for the local agrarian economy. By preying on rats, bandicoots, and crop-destroying insects, these owls act as "farmer's friends," providing natural pest control in the surrounding agricultural belts.

Bengaluru airport to go 'algorithmic' with new AI tie-up

Kempegowda International Airport is shifting from a traditional transit hub to an algorithmic airport by using data to predict passenger behaviour. Through a new partnership with decision sciences firm Mu Sigma, airport operator BIAL will deploy artificial intelligence to analyse real-time data across all operations. "The goal is to move away from reactive fixes and instead use predictive models to manage everything from terminal footfalls to retail demand. By unifying data from existing systems, the airport aims to anticipate traveller needs before they arise, making the facility a living laboratory for data-driven decision-making," said an official.

Sources said that predictive analytics will be used to reduce wait times at check-in counters, security, and restaurants by forecasting crowd density. Real-time demand data will also be applied to parking and transport services to manage traffic flow and optimise pricing. On the digital front, the Pulse App and official website will use these algorithms to send passengers tailored notifications, loyalty rewards and deals. "Harnessing Mu Sigma's advanced Decision Science capabilities will allow us to personalise every interaction, anticipate disruptions before they occur, and elevate efficiency," said George Fanthome, Chief Technical Officer, BIAL. **— BMB**

GBA Chief issues stern directive on ward boundaries

Gearing up for the high-stakes elections across the five corporations under the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA), Chief Commissioner M Maheshwar Rao has ordered officials to strictly adhere to notified ward boundaries without any deviations. At a high-level meeting, the Commissioner emphasised that precision and transparency in the draft electoral rolls are non-negotiable. To ensure no voters are misplaced, the IT department has been tasked with a systematic survey to update and align digital maps with the official gazette descriptions. The move aims to eliminate any border disputes between wards or corporations, ensuring a foolproof foundation for the upcoming polls.

To streamline the massive exercise, each of the five corporations will now have a dedicated election wing, featuring a Tahsildar and a full administrative squad. Additional Commissioners of the Revenue Department have been handpicked as nodal officers to tackle data discrepancies and manage the tricky task of wards split between different civic bodies. With a standard operating procedure (SOP) now in place, the administration is leaving no stone unturned to ensure that the voter lists are as reliable as they are accurate. **— BMB**

EPF cash to soon be just a click away

Starting this April, the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) is set to launch a dedicated mobile app that will allow its eight crore members to withdraw funds and check balances via a UPI-based payment system. Currently undergoing rigorous testing with 100 dummy accounts to iron out technical glitches, the new platform promises to slash waiting times significantly. Officials said that once live, the electronic auto-settlement system is expected to credit funds into a member's bank account within just three days of application—a massive leap from the current cumbersome process involving the UMANG app or UAN portal.

The Labour Ministry is preparing for a grand rollout of this digital upgrade. An official said, "The auto-settlement limit has already been hiked from Rs 1 lakh to Rs 5 lakh. By automating the lion's share of the claims filed, the EPFO hopes to ditch the red tape and reduce the immense manual workload on its staff. For the millions of salaried employees in the city, this means no more endless follow-ups with the HR department or the PF office; your hard-earned savings are finally moving at the speed of the 21st century." **— BMB**

Insurance safety net, yet patients pay the price

Policyholders burdened with out-of-pocket amounts for services not covered by their insurance policies, including items deemed non-essential by insurers

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Patients often end up bearing considerable part of total expenses from their own pocket

Despite having health insurance, many patients continue to face heavy financial burdens during medical emergencies due to non-medical expenses that are excluded from insurance coverage. Health insurance is meant to provide financial relief during unforeseen medical situations. However, policyholders are often caught off guard when they are asked to pay significant out-of-pocket amounts for items and services not covered by their insurance plans.

Sources said that non-medical expenses typically include items used during treatment and recovery that are deemed non-essential by insurers. These may include surgical gloves, cotton, sanitisers, disposable tools, and more. While essential for treatment, they are not reimbursed under most insurance policies. "Even for minor surgeries, 10–15 per cent of the bill accounts for non-medical costs. In major procedures, this can go beyond 20 per cent. The government should introduce regulations to ensure coverage of essential items used in surgery," said a surgeon.

It is unfair to burden patients with non-medical costs despite having insurance, as it defeats very purpose of financial protection, says doctor

In cases like accidents and critical surgeries, patients often end up bearing 20 per cent or more of the total expenses from their own pocket. Families are urging insurance companies to include such necessary items under coverage.

Mohammed Siraj, whose father was recently admitted in a hospital said, "For instance, in a Rs 1 lakh surgery, about Rs 10,000 or more is typically spent on non-medical expenses. Furthermore, doctors point out that insurance companies deduct an additional 2–3 per cent from the remaining bill under various heads, meaning only 80–85 per cent of the actual hospital bill is reimbursed." Another senior doctor said, "It's unfair to make patients pay non-medical costs despite having insurance. This defeats the purpose of financial protection. Insurers must prioritise patient care over profit margins." Healthcare professionals and patient families alike are calling for policy reforms to address this growing concern, emphasising the need for insurance schemes to better align with real-world hospital expenses.

Broken signal flashes loud message of peril

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Measures to ease traffic congestion have been urged (File photo)

Parents and students commuting through Vignan Nagar Junction have raised serious safety concerns over the non-functional traffic signal and heavy congestion at the busy intersection. Civic volunteers have highlighted the urgent need for immediate action, particularly to safeguard schoolchildren who cycle through the area every day.

"Vignan Nagar Junction is a critical transit point for students of SSRVM, Sishya BEML, Chaitanya, and NCF High School. The existing traffic signal is not operational, and daily bottlenecks are putting children's lives at risk. We need quick interventions before an accident occurs," said Shachi Pathak, civic volunteer.

The junction, near KR Puram and CV Raman Nagar, caters to hundreds of students who commute by bicycle, along with regular vehicular traffic. According to Shachi, the situation is worsened by street vendors occupying footpaths near the junction, which forces motorists to park on the main road.

"This kind of 'induced parking' reduces the road width to a single lane, making it extremely difficult and unsafe for school buses, cyclists, and pedestrians to move through the junction," she added.

Residents and civic volunteers have suggested a set of practical measures to traffic police officials to address these safety concerns. They have requested the authorities to operationalise the existing automated traffic signal during peak hours—between 8 am and 11 am, and 5 pm and 9 pm—to ensure safer crossings for students and other commuters.

They have also demanded the relocation of street vendors at least 50 to 100 metres away from the junction, along with strict enforcement of a no-parking and no-hawking zone around the intersection. This, residents say, will help restore the full width of the road and ensure safe pedestrian movement.

Residents and civic volunteers raise alarm over risks posed by defunct traffic signal and ensuing congestion

Another key suggestion includes repainting stop lines 3 to 5 metres away from the intersection to allow school buses to turn without being blocked by stationary vehicles. The need for geometric correction of road edges was also highlighted, with residents urging authorities to round off sharp footpath corners to enable smoother turns for long school buses and prevent them from swinging into oncoming lanes.

Additionally, residents have called for clear lane markings, directional arrows, and the installation of CCTV or ANPR cameras on signal poles to discourage traffic violations and promote disciplined driving.

Shachi has requested a joint site inspection with the traffic department to discuss the immediate activation of the signal and implementation of these measures.

"Traffic moves fairly smoothly during non-peak hours; the real congestion begins during peak times. If traffic signals are actively managed then, and stop lines are set slightly further back, vehicle movement could improve," a resident said.

IN BRIEF

Serial burglar's spree ends with arrest

A serial housebreaker's run ended at KR Market after Madiwala police nabbed him following a month-long investigation into a series of daring daylight burglaries. The case began on January 10, when a resident on VP Road returned home in the evening to find the main door lock smashed and his wardrobe ransacked. Acting on a tip-off, a special team intercepted the suspect on January 29. During interrogation, the accused confessed to a string of lock-breaking heists across Madiwala and Kalasipalya, where he targeted locked houses between noon and dusk.

The police recovery was substantial, totaling valuables worth Rs 3.10 lakh, including 14.55 grams of gold, silver anklets, and a laptop. Crucially, the team also seized the iron rod used by the suspect to pry open doors. While this arrest has successfully solved three pending burglary cases, the hunt is still on for an absconding accomplice. **BMB**

Hoysala teams trace missing individuals

In two swift operations, police successfully traced and rescued vulnerable individuals across the city. On February 7, the Hoysala-199 team swung into action after a frantic house owner in Koramangala reported a domestic help and her three-year-old child missing. ASI MD Shivashankarappa and PC Dundappa reached the spot in nine minutes, combed the 4th Block locality, and managed to track down the duo before any harm could befall them, reuniting them with their worried family. In another case, a passerby alerted the police about a man in distress. Investigations revealed he was a native of Kerala who had been missing for three days. The city cops ensured he was safely handed over to the neighboring state's police. **BMB**

Domestic help's kin nabbed for Rs 36 lakh heist

Trusting a long-time domestic worker proved costly for a resident of Thyagaraja Nagar, but the Basavanagudi police managed to crack the case, recovering loot worth Rs 36 lakh. The theft came to light when the complainant, whose daughter is studying in Hyderabad, found 249 grams of gold and 2.8 kg of silver missing from a cupboard in October. Suspicion fell on the domestic help's sister's son, who lived with the help and had easy access to the house keys for 25 years. After a formal complaint was lodged in December, cops tracked down the suspect near a main road in Thyagaraja Nagar in January, where he eventually confessed to the high-stakes robbery. **BMB**

Bengaluru outpaces Indian cities with 66% surge in property prices

Post-pandemic surge lifts city values sharply, fuelled by IT corridors, gated communities, infrastructure upgrades

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Bengaluru has emerged as the leading real estate market among major Indian cities, recording a 66% increase in property prices per square foot (PSF) between 2019 and 2025, according to a recent report tracking post-Covid price trends. The city's average PSF has risen from ₹6,002 in 2019 to ₹9,963 in 2025, outpacing most western markets such as Mumbai (48%) and Pune (59%), and standing just behind southern peer Hyderabad (81%) and northern hub Gurgaon (85%).

The data highlights Bangalore's strong appeal to both investors and end-users, driven by robust demand in IT corridors, expanding residential micro-markets, and sustained interest from institutional buyers. The city's performance positions it as a top-choice destination in India's rapidly appreciating real estate landscape.

Bangalore's real estate market in 2025 is marked by fewer but significantly larger project launches, with average units per project reaching record highs. North Bangalore continues to dominate new supply, driven by airport road connectivity and growing GCC employment, while South Bangalore has emerged as the fastest-growing zone. East Bangalore is witnessing a shift, with resale activity overtaking new supply. Price appreciation remains steady at around 8%, and gated communities account for over 54% of buyer demand.

Developers see structural growth

Vivek Singhal, Co-founder and CEO of Multigen India, said Bengaluru's real estate growth is being driven by structural demand rather than cyclical swings. "This is the result of sustained economic strength, job creation and a widening homebuyer base, not a short-term rebound." He added that the city could see up to 20% growth over the next 12–18 months, supported by a diverse pipeline of quality residential supply.

Saurabh Garg, Co-founder and Chief Business Officer of NoBroker, noted that average prices have risen from about ₹6,000 per sq ft in 2019 to nearly ₹10,000 per sq ft in 2025 — a 66% appreciation. He attributed the rise to end-user demand, infrastructure upgrades and employment growth, with North and East Bengaluru leading demand. K R Puram topped buyer interest in 2025, followed by Whitefield and

Electronic City, driven by metro access and ready homes.

End-user demand and infrastructure push prices higher

As new launches skew increasingly premium, resale homes in high-conviction corridors are witnessing quicker absorption, offering buyers an easier entry through established neighbourhoods, faster possession and clearer price discovery. "This trend underlines Bengaluru's resilience and strong housing fundamentals," Garg said.

Nesara BS, Chairman of Concorde, described a tale of two markets. "While established areas have logged a healthy 50% appreciation, high-growth micro-markets have effectively doubled in value since 2019. It's no longer about buying in Bengaluru, but choosing the right corridor at the right time."

Fewer launches, larger projects and investor confidence drive sustained appreciation, positioning the tech capital among India's strongest housing markets

The 66% rise reflects the city-wide average, with prices nearing ₹10,000 per sq ft. However, appreciation remains uneven. Growth is concentrated in the East and North, driven by tech parks and airport connectivity, while the South continues a steady climb as the city's cultural core.

Forced evictions without rehab measures is illegal, argue experts

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

authorities with regard to the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014, which prohibits eviction until a comprehensive survey is completed and vending certificates are issued. "While five different corporations have been created, they (authorities) keep looking to the GBA for guidance. The GBA is supposed to oversee larger issues. It does not make sense for approval to be sought for small issues such as distribution of identity cards from the GBA," he expressed, highlighting the need for decentralised working.

"For us, this transition has meant only trouble," said a vendor who runs a fruit cart. "They say the system is changing, but until it changes, we are the ones paying the price. If we are removed even for a day, we lose our entire income," she added. Unions and vendor associations have criticised the transition for ignoring statutory safeguards established under the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014. They warn that decisions based on an outdated and incomplete survey risk rendering tens of thousands of vendors "unauthorised", leaving them vulnerable to displacement. Over 27,000 street vendors were identified in a survey conducted by the erstwhile Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) between September and December 2024. Street vendors' unions, however, argue that the figure severely underrepresents the city's actual vending population, which they place at no less than one lakh. They point to PM-SVANidhi loan data and findings from independent studies as evidence that Bengaluru has far more street vendors than the official survey acknowledges.

Legal experts emphasise that existing law recognises street vending as more than just informal commerce. Judicial pronouncements have upheld that the right to earn a livelihood through street vending is protected under the Indian Constitution, and vendors are to be seen as "assets of the city" rather than encroachers. Forced evictions without due process or rehabilitation, they say, could amount to violations of fundamental rights.

What is a TVC responsible for?

A Town Vending Committee (TVC) is a statutory body at the municipal level, mandated under the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014. It is responsible for regulating street vending while safeguarding vendors' livelihoods. Its core functions include conducting surveys to identify street vendors, issuing certificates of vending and identity cards, planning and notifying vending zones, and resolving disputes related to street vending.

Benches under lock & key

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is a historical place. Authorities must take suitable measures to retain and save this historical place," said Jayaram. Urban strategist Vinod Jacob said that heritage buildings and gazebos constructed by the British remain fully operational at the park today, a stark reminder of our current lack of due diligence in quality control and vendor selection. "For public works in a heritage park, we must prioritise top quality materials and workmanship," he said.

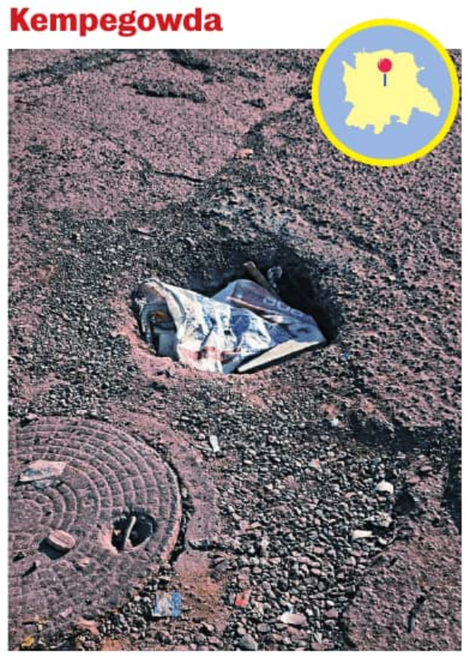
Priya-Chetty Rajagopal from Heritage Beku said that Karagada Kunte has historical significance. "The horticulture department officials must look into the matter and fix the problems," she said. Another shocking sight is the unutilised concrete benches installed near the Karagada Kunte. A locked gate prevents visitors from using the benches that were installed by BSCL. Horticulture Department Deputy Director (Cubbon Park) Kusuma said Karagada Kunte assured BM of prompt action. "I will take measures to reconstruct the marble steps of Karagada Kunte. All the problems will be fixed in a month," said the Deputy Director. The Thigala community has been celebrating the Karaga festival along the Karagada Kunte in Cubbon Park in April every year. During the festival, the pond is illuminated with colourful lamps.

Will the authorities concerned fix the problem much before the Karaga festival? We wait and watch.

whatsapp MIRROR
9591233247
Problems in your area?
Send us a picture along with specific details. And please, no phone calls or spamming

Road hazard

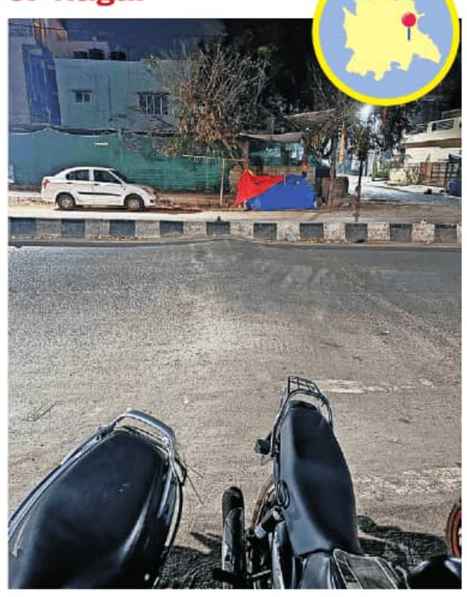
Kempegowda



A pothole has developed at the junction near the hospital on Kempegowda Third Cross Road, posing a risk to motorists.

Speed danger

JP Nagar



An unmarked speed breaker opposite SLV Hotel in JP Nagar 7th Phase, RBI Layout, is causing frequent early-morning bike accidents due to poor visibility at night.

Safety risk

Marathahalli

A broken slab near Yemlur Junction in Marathahalli is creating a safety hazard for pedestrians and vehicles.

Piped gas remains pipe dream

A decade after its ambitious launch, the 'One Nation, One Gas Grid' project in Karnataka is moving at a snail's pace, leaving over 85% of households still dependent on expensive LPG cylinders.

Despite a 10-year head start, only 11.85 lakh homes have secured piped natural gas (PNG) connections.

The delay is being blamed on a bitter cocktail of poor coordination between the State and the Centre, and massive red tape at local bodies, where high road-cutting fees and pending permissions have stalled major players such as GAIL, Adani and IOCL.

While Bengaluru Urban and Rural districts lead with 5.15 lakh connections, several other districts remain stuck in the preliminary survey phase, proving that the dream of a cylinder-free kitchen is still a distant reality for many.

Sources said the sluggish rollout is not just a logistical nightmare; it is hitting the common man's pocket hard.

Users miss out on savings of nearly ₹200 a month compared with conventional cylinders, not to mention the convenience of a 24/7 supply and the added safety of gas that dissipates quickly in the event of a leak.

While officials are banking on the 'Gati Shakti' scheme to bypass bureaucratic bottlenecks and are targeting a 2030 finish, the reality on the ground remains grim. **BMB**

Corrupt officials in e-radar

Cracking the whip on rampant corruption and procedural delays, Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda has ordered the swift conclusion of departmental inquiries against officials accused of multi-crore land scams and dereliction of duty.

The government is particularly red-faced over 38 high-stakes cases involving retired IAS officers, Assistant Commissioners and Tahsildars that have been gathering dust for over three years. To end the culture of shielding the "tainted", a new online monitoring system is set to be launched within three months, ensuring that every step from the initial complaint to the final probe report is tracked digitally to prevent files from conveniently disappearing.

The Minister's intervention follows a string of embarrassments for the department, including a recent protest in which a frustrated farmer in Madhugiri dumped his radish crop at a taluk office, offering it as a "bribe" to get his work done.

From the illegal allotment of government land worth crores to fraudulent compensation payouts, the Minister has posed five stinging questions to the top brass, demanding to know why charge sheets have not been filed despite FIRs, and whether the delays are a deliberate attempt to protect the guilty.

With the new time-frame in place, the revenue department often called the 'mother of all departments' is under pressure to prove it can clean up its own house. **BMB**

Dirty politics mar child rights body appointments

Activists question neutrality as political party-linked names dominate key roles within Karnataka's child protection commission

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"Fresh recruitment process leads to demands for transparent vetting, apolitical expertise and merit-based appointments safeguarding vulnerable children in the state

It is both shocking and ironic to see prospective candidates with political affiliations being selected as chairperson and members of the Karnataka State Commission for Child Rights (KSCPCR). The majority of candidates selected for the chairperson's post have been affiliated or associated with either the Congress or the BJP.

The appointment of K Naganna Gowda as KSCPCR Chairperson had sparked controversy, as he was selected for the post despite not being among the 10 candidates recommended by the internal committee of the Women and Child Welfare Department. However, the Hon'ble High Court later upheld Naganna Gowda's appointment.

BJP member Umesh Aradhya was selected as KSCPCR Chairperson in 2012. Congress member from Mangaluru, Kripa Amar Alva, was appointed KSCPCR Chairperson in 2015. Anthony Sebastian, a Congress member, was appointed KSCPCR Chairperson in 2019. Nina Nayak, however, had the distinction of being selected as KSCPCR Chairperson without any political support or affiliation.

The Women and Child Development Department issued a notification on February 9 inviting applications for the posts of chairperson and members of the KSCPCR for a tenure of three years. Candidates must have a minimum of 10 years' experience in the field of child rights. The last date for submitting applications is March 9.

Meanwhile, child rights activists have urged the state government to select suitable candidates as chairperson and members of the KSCPCR, without giving importance to political affiliations.

Stating that the selection process for the chairperson and members of the KSCPCR has commenced, Nagasimha G Rao, a child rights activist, said the authorities concerned must take steps to ensure that individuals without political affiliations are selected.

"The KSCPCR needs a dedicated team of experts specialising in child rights. The chairperson and members should have in-depth knowledge of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, as well as the country's laws relating to children, and must be committed social advocates. The selection committee should go beyond merely reviewing the details provided in the applications and conduct thorough background checks before finalising appointments, ensuring that only the most suitable candidates are chosen for the commission," Rao said.

He added that transparency in the selection criteria and public disclosure of shortlisted candidates would help build greater trust among stakeholders. "Additionally, involving independent child rights NGOs in the vetting process would help prioritise merit over influence. Ultimately, empowering the commission with apolitical experts will lead to more effective advocacy and protection for vulnerable children across the state," he said.

Anjali Ramanna, a women's and juvenile rights advocate, said the selection of members and the chairperson is a mandatory process intended for welfare, but public dissatisfaction arises every time the selection is completed.

"Many times, the process is challenged in court. The lack of transparency in the selection procedure causes people to lose faith in the system. I hope that this time the selection will not yield to the pressures of money and caste politics," she said.

Bail rejected, MLA vanishes

BJP MLA from Bengaluru's KR Puram, Byrathi Basavaraj, is facing imminent arrest after the Karnataka High Court on Tuesday rejected his anticipatory bail plea in the murder case of rowdy-sheeter Shivaprakash alias Biklu Shiva.

A bench headed by Justice Sunil Dutt Yadav vacated the interim protection from arrest granted earlier. Following the order, CID teams launched a search operation to trace the MLA, who has reportedly gone absconding. A Look Out Circular has been issued amid suspicions that he may attempt to flee the country.

The murder occurred on July 15 last year in the Halasuru area of Bengaluru.

Investigators claim to have gathered crucial evidence linking Basavaraj to the case and say custodial interrogation is necessary to uncover the larger conspiracy.

He has been booked on murder charges and named as the fifth accused, based on a complaint filed by the victim's mother. **IANS**

Roy case probe reaches Dubai

Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara on Tuesday said the investigation into the suicide of industrialist CJ Roy was progressing, with authorities gathering key details from Dubai. He stated that the questioning of Income Tax officers involved in the raid had been left to the discretion of the Special Investigation Team (SIT).

Roy, founder and chairman of the Confident Group, allegedly shot himself at his Bengaluru office while an Income Tax search was underway. Parameshwara, when asked about the SIT probe into the case, said, "He was in Dubai, and several details need to be gathered from there. There is also the Income Tax aspect. All issues will be probed, and the investigation report will be submitted later."

He added, "The SIT has informed me that no suicide note was found. They have seized his diary and other materials. Details will not be revealed in bits and pieces. The questioning of IT officers has been left to the SIT. The investigation is being conducted based on the findings..." **IANS**

Karnataka fails to submit landslide vulnerability data

Study shows over sixty percent Western Ghats landslide prone as state response remains pending

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High risk zones dominate Western Ghats landscape

Following an order by the National Green Tribunal (NGT), the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) has written to the Karnataka Government seeking a detailed report on landslide-vulnerable areas in the state.

The Ministry has, through multiple letters, asked the State Government to submit comprehensive information on landslide-prone taluks in districts including Chikkamagaluru, Dakshina Kannada, Hassan, Kodagu, Shivamogga, Udupi and Uttara Kannada.

However, despite repeated communication, the State Government has not yet furnished the required details. The Ministry has informed the Tribunal that it has written to Karnataka on four occasions recently, but the response remains awaited.

"So far as the landslide-vulnerable taluks are concerned, the Ministry wrote a letter on December 4, 2025, to the State Government requesting relevant data and further issued reminders on December 8, December 12 and December 22. The response from the State Government is awaited," the MoEF&CC stated in its submission to the NGT.

The Tribunal had taken suo motu cognisance of a media report highlighting a large number of landslides reported in Karnataka during 2024 and subsequently issued notice to the MoEF&CC, directing it to place before the court a detailed report on landslide-vulnerable areas in the state.

Notably, earlier assessments by the Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre (KNDMC) and the Karnataka State Disaster Management Authority (KSDMA) have already identified several landslide-prone taluks, particularly in Western Ghats districts such as Chikkamagaluru, Dakshina Kannada, Hassan, Kodagu, Shivamogga, Udupi and Uttara Kannada.

Experts have emphasised that updated and consolidated information on landslide vulnerability is critical, especially given the number of infrastructure and development projects proposed in the ecologically sensitive Western Ghats region of Karnataka.

Earlier assessments by KNDMC and KSDMA have already identified landslide-prone taluks across seven Western Ghats districts including Kodagu, Shivamogga and Uttara Kannada

"In the recent past, the State Government has adopted a lackadaisical approach in furnishing information to courts in matters related to the environment. We are approaching another monsoon season, and timely sharing of data will be in the interest of the Western Ghats and the public, who generally suffer during landslides. Several studies have highlighted the region's vulnerability, and this correspondence must happen immediately," said a wildlife conservationist.

A recent landslide susceptibility analysis conducted by the Indian Institute of Technology, Dharwad, has found that more than 60 per cent of Karnataka's Western Ghats region is prone to landslides.

The analysis, covering seven districts, showed that 30 per cent of the landslide-susceptible area lies in Uttara Kannada, followed by 17.18 per cent in Shivamogga, 17 per cent in Chikkamagaluru, 13.88 per cent in Kodagu, 9.63 per cent in Dakshina Kannada, 8.26 per cent in Hassan and 4 per cent in Udupi.

The study further noted that 35.6 per cent and 25.1 per cent of the study area fall under high and very high susceptibility zones respectively, while medium susceptibility zones account for 21.24 per cent. Low and very low susceptibility zones together comprise only 18.06 per cent of the total study area.

Students protest scheme that may shut 25,000 govt schools

Opposition mounts against KPS Magnet as educationists warn of rising dropouts, job losses, and exclusion of marginalised children

Left student organisations, including the All India Students' Federation (AISF), Students' Federation of India (SFI), All India Democratic Students' Organisation (AIDSO) and All India Students' Association (AISA), held a protest convention in Bengaluru on Tuesday opposing the State government's "KPS Magnet" scheme, under which more than 25,000 government schools are allegedly proposed to be shut.

The convention, held at Gandhi Bhavan, accused the Congress-led government of weakening the Right to Education Act through the consolidation of government schools. Educationist Niranjanaradhya alleged that the scheme amounted to an attack on universal access to education. "The Congress government has attacked the Right to Education Act which they themselves implemented," he said while addressing the gathering.

VN Rajashekhar, State Vice President of the All India Save Education Committee, said closing neighbourhood schools violated the vision of freedom fighters and education reformers. He said pioneers of the Navodaya movement wanted education to reach every village, but schools were now being shut in the name of KPS, calling the scheme an attempt to turn education into a commodity.

M Shashidhar, State Secretary of the AIKKMS farmers' organisation, warned the scheme would disproportionately affect children from poor farming families. He said KPS Magnet pushes students to schools three to five kilometres away, asking whether landless farmers and labourers can manage this daily. He added girls would be most affected, cautioning that loss of education could force early marriages there. Representing anganwadi workers, Sunanda criticised both the Centre and the State governments, stating that "their conspiracy to swallow children's education is condemnable," while pursuing policies that harm farmers, labourers and marginalised communities.

Malini Mesta of the Midday Meal Workers' Association said the scheme would deepen the crisis in public education. Noting that out-of-school children in Karnataka have risen to 22%, she questioned official assurances, saying that while the Education Minister claims schools will not close even with one child, over 25,000 are shutting, risking lakhs of dropouts and jobs for 40,000 workers. — BMB

State readies suicide prevention policy for schools

To curb rising student suicides in government and residential schools, the State government will roll out the Karnataka Suicide Prevention Policy 2025. The policy aims to reduce unnatural student deaths to zero by strengthening mental resilience rather than focusing solely on academic performance. Loneliness, academic pressure and fear of abuse have been identified as key triggers. The Social Welfare Department, which recorded 23 student deaths over the past three years, is spearheading implementation.

Sources said the policy adopts an intensive, ground-level approach. A Mentor-Parent-Teacher will be assigned for every 20 to 25 students to closely monitor emotional wellbeing. Monthly health check-ups, counselling sessions and structured interactions with local police circle inspectors are mandated to promote safety and deter abuse. The framework introduces yoga, meditation and life-skills education to help students cope with exam stress. Emergency helpline numbers will be displayed in hostels, with protocols ensuring immediate communication between wardens and parents, aiming to create safer, supportive living environments for students. — BMB

Tech snag leaves metro commuters stranded

Metro services in the city witnessed inconvenience on Tuesday after a server-related issue disrupted the WhatsApp-based ticketing system, leaving many commuters unable to purchase digital tickets during peak hours. Passengers relying on WhatsApp ticketing reported failed transactions and unresponsive links, resulting in queues at station entry points as they were forced to switch to token counters or smart cards. "I usually book my ticket on WhatsApp while walking to the station, but the link kept failing today," said a commuter. The service was restored later in the day, while commuters called for systems to ensure digital ticketing reliability. — BMB

Leopard attacks young pilgrim at MM hills

Panic gripped pilgrims at Male Mahadeshwara Hills on Tuesday after a leopard attacked a young boy trekking to the shrine. The victim, Shreyas from Channapatna, was walking with a group of devotees when the predator lunged at him. The boy's screams alerted nearby pilgrims, forcing the leopard to retreat into the dense forest. Shreyas was rushed to the Male Mahadeshwara Primary Health Centre, where he is being treated for injuries. The incident marks a recurrence of man-animal conflict in the region, coming a month after a leopard mauled a pilgrim to death. Though trekking was earlier restricted, routes were reopened for the Shivarathri Fair with forest guards stationed every kilometre. Despite measures, the attack terrified devotees. — BMB

Unheralded nations begin to come to terms with format; 2028 Summer Olympics inclusion raises bar

Twenty20 and 20 National teams

The shortest format of the game appears to have scripted a revolution in men's cricket. From only 12 nations competing in the inaugural tournament in 2007, interestingly, there are 20 National teams in the 2026 Twenty20 World Cup.

With T20 cricket being more about slamming the ball all over the park rather than the bowlers rattling the stumps, the bats are being used more like a baseball club as the unheralded nations begin to come to terms with the format.

From just Tests to One Day Internationals to T20s, the game has witnessed more nations taking to it than what was the case a decade or so ago. The fact that a large number of Indians have settled in different parts of the World in search of jobs and livelihood has also played a significant part in this increase in numbers.

Many of the teams have a substantial number of Non-Resident Indians in their line-ups, chiefly US and Canada. Many other teams too have NRIs in their sides. Added to this is the fact that many coaches from India have also taken up coaching assignments abroad. Foreign teams have visited India to provide exposure to their young players. All this has gone a long way in these nations initiating steps to promote and improve in the shortest format of the game.

With Twenty20 cricket being one of the disciplines at the 2028 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles for men and women, aspiring new nations have an added incentive to raise the bar and emerge as worthy opponents if not vying for a podium finish. Cricket was last played during the Summer Olympics in 1900 in Paris.

In terms of recent performances, Nepal went down fighting all the way to England by four runs. The Netherlands all but shocked Pakistan. The United States team, composed mainly of non-resident Indians showed enough resilience to not only chop the famed Indian batting top order but also go close to chasing a total that was not imposing by India's standards, Scotland and Ireland flashed their bats at everything on or outside the wickets as if holding a baseball club in their hands. The Italians, refreshingly of natives, also put up a good show on debut.

"We are not here only to participate," thundered Nepal's captain Rohit Poudel in the post-match Media conference. "The result did not go in our favour. But we did pretty well. There are areas we can improve and I still hope that we can qualify for the Super 8 stage," he concluded.

Well, this was the scenario in the opening matches of the men's T20 World Cup cricket tournament being hosted jointly by India and Sri Lanka.

Chasing 148 for victory, Pakistan were 100 for 5 and down on their knees. Two more wickets fell and the green-brigade weren't in more trouble.

The US team, according to their President Donald Trump, is a very strong team. For a brief portion of their match against India, Trump's words sounded to be prophetic.

The clashes between the non-traditional teams have also witnessed keen fare like the one between Netherlands and Namibia produced. All this augurs well for cricket at the International level.

—SS Shreekumar

The confident newbies: Netherlands team players stand for the national anthem

Nepal's Sandeep Lamichhane celebrates with teammate Rohit Paudel

Canada players celebrate a wicket

Today's matches

- South Africa V/S Afghanistan — 11.00 am
- Australia V/S Ireland — 03.00 pm
- England V/S West Indies — 07.00 pm

Netherlands' captain Scott Edwards and Netherlands' Bas de Leede celebrate their victory against Namibia

Leede the way

Fast-bowling all-rounder Bas de Leede stepped up to hit an unbeaten 72 as the Netherlands registered a commanding seven-wicket win over Namibia in a Group A clash of 2026 Men's T20 World Cup at the Arun Jaitley Stadium on Tuesday.

Namibia 156/8 (20)

Netherlands 159/3 (18)

The chase of 157 was set up smartly by the Netherlands, as de Leede became the first player from his country to score a fifty and take two wickets, which previously stalled Namibia's charge, in the same T20 World Cup match.

His unbeaten 72 came off 48 balls, laced with five fours and four sixes at a strike-rate of 150, helped the Netherlands reach home with two overs to spare. Batting with intent and authority, de Leede muscled the ball to all parts of the ground, mixing clean hitting with calculated placement, and never allowed Namibia's bowlers to settle down.

His 70-run partnership with Colin Ackermann was the turning point, as Namibia's attack, despite being disciplined at times, lacked the penetration to get regular breakthroughs. By the time Ackermann departed, the Dutch were well on course for the win, as de Leede and captain Scott Edwards applied finishing touches in style. **—Agencies**

A partnership that broke records

New Zealand openers Tim Seifert and Finn Allen shared the highest-ever partnership for any wicket at a men's T20 World Cup on Tuesday.

Their brutal power-hitting in an unbroken stand of 175 saw the Black Caps beat the United Arab Emirates by 10 wickets.

Seifert followed his half century in the first Group D game against Afghanistan with an unbeaten 89 off 42 balls. Allen was not far behind and smacked 84 not out off 50 balls.

New Zealand sprinted to 175-0 in 15.2 overs for its second successive win in a group that also features 2024 finalist South Africa. After winning the toss, UAE skipper Muhammad Waseem (66 not out off 45 deliveries) and Alishan Sharafu (55 off 47) had earlier anchored their team on a good batting wicket to 173-6 in 20 overs.

UAE 173/6 (20)

New Zealand 172/0 (15.2)

But the target proved too small for the aggressive New Zealand batters. Seifert and Allen provided a rollicking start of 78-0 in the power play as UAE pace bowlers bowled too many length balls which were duly dispatched for boundaries on both sides of the wicket.

Seifert hit 12 fours and three sixes, including the winning six over the head of Muhammad Rohid, who was the most expensive UAE bowler with 0-51 in 3.2 overs. Pacer Junaid Siddique's four overs went for 47 without any wicket while Muhammad Arfan conceded 36 runs off his three overs.

Allen matched Seifert with his innovative ramp shots and hit five fours and five sixes.

The previous record stand at a men's T20 World Cup (170 runs) was set by England batters Alex Hales and Jos Buttler against India in 2022. **—AP**

New Zealand's Tim Seifert, right, and Finn Allen interact during their match against United Arab Emirates

Pakistan keep USA in check for 32-run win

Pakistan defeated the United States of America by 32 runs in their Group A T20 World Cup match in Colombo on Tuesday. Riding on opener Sahibzada Farhan's 73 off 41 balls and a late cameo from Shadab Khan (30 off 12), Pakistan posted 190 for 9 after being asked to bat.

Pacer Shadley van Schalkwyk (4/25) was once again the pick of bowlers for USA. In reply, the USA lost wickets at regular intervals and slumped to their second successive defeat in the tournament. Earlier, Pakistan posted a competitive 190/9 in their allotted 20 overs against the USA, thanks largely to opener Sahibzada Farhan's 73-run knock, when the two sides faced off in their Group A match of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup at the Sinhalese Sports Club in Colombo on Tuesday.

The foundation was laid by the opening pair of Saim Ayub and Farhan, who shared a vital 54-run partnership for the first wicket. Ayub started positively, scoring 19 runs off 17 balls, but it was Farhan who really stamped his authority on the innings. The left-hander was in explosive form, hitting 73 runs off just 41 balls, including six fours and five towering sixes. Farhan's fearless approach allowed Pakistan to get off to a flying start.

After Ayub's dismissal, the innings saw a brief hiccup, but Farhan's partnership with former captain Babar Azam steadied the ship. Together, they put on a substantial 81 runs for the third wicket. Babar, who scored a well-measured 46 runs from 32 balls, ensured the momentum never faltered. His ability to rotate the strike while punishing loose deliveries complemented Farhan's aggression perfectly. This partnership was crucial in maintaining the run rate above 9 per over, providing a solid platform for a strong finish.

The middle and lower-middle order faced pressure as wickets fell at regular intervals. Skipper Salman Agha and Mohammad Nawaz failed to make big contributions. **—PTI**

Pakistan's Usman Tariq, centre, celebrates with teammates the wicket of United States' Milind Kumar

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Genetic promises, scientific limits

Embryo selection claims outpace evidence, raising ethical, medical, societal risks

Prospective parents are increasingly being marketed genetic tests that claim to predict which IVF embryo will grow into the tallest, smartest or healthiest child. These tests promise parents an unprecedented level of control over their future child's traits and disease risks, presenting embryo selection as a pathway to a "better" baby. However, these claims far exceed what science can reliably deliver at present.

While the technology sounds sophisticated, the benefits of such testing are likely minimal, highly uncertain and, in many cases, unmeasurable. At the same time, the risks to patients, future children and society are real and significant. When making profound and emotionally charged decisions about future children, parents deserve accurate information grounded in evidence, not marketing hype or exaggerated promises.

Prospective parents can already have IVF embryos tested for inherited conditions. These existing tests typically screen for single-gene disorders such as cystic fibrosis or spinal muscular atrophy, where the presence of a particular gene mutation strongly predicts disease. This form of testing is widely accepted because it helps prevent serious, well-defined genetic illnesses.

The latest testing being promoted goes much further. It attempts to predict complex traits influenced by thousands of genes working together. These tests generate what are known as "polygenic risk scores" for embryos. A polygenic risk score estimates an embryo's theoretical likelihood of developing certain diseases, such as heart disease or Alzheimer's, or traits like intelligence, height or educational attainment. Parents are then invited to select embryos based on these scores.

Although Australian companies do not currently offer such testing, multiple firms in the United States do. One company, Nucleus Genomics, has aggressively marketed these services, plastering New York with advertisements carrying the slogan "Have your best baby". The company claims to screen embryos for up to 2,000 traits, including eye colour, IQ, baldness and diseases that typically appear later in life.

Our research group examined whether this technology is ready for clinical use. Using the same framework applied to evaluate any medical screening test, we assessed the predictive accuracy and potential benefits of polygenic risk scores for embryo selection. Our findings showed these predictions are extremely uncertain and often misleading.

For late-onset diseases such as Alzheimer's or heart disease, it is impossible to measure benefits because outcomes will not be known for decades. Mathematical modelling suggests the gains are vanishingly small, perhaps amounting to a few IQ points or one to three centimetres in height. While such differences may appear meaningful, their real-world significance remains questionable.

These individuals experienced different diets, pollution levels, education systems and health care access. Genes interact continuously with the environment, meaning patterns observed in past populations may not predict outcomes in today's rapidly changing world.

As a result, polygenic risk scores assess only one side of a complex equation. Traits such as intelligence are profoundly shaped by early education, nutrition, parental support and socioeconomic conditions. Selecting an embryo based on marginal genetic differences while ignoring these influences is deeply flawed.

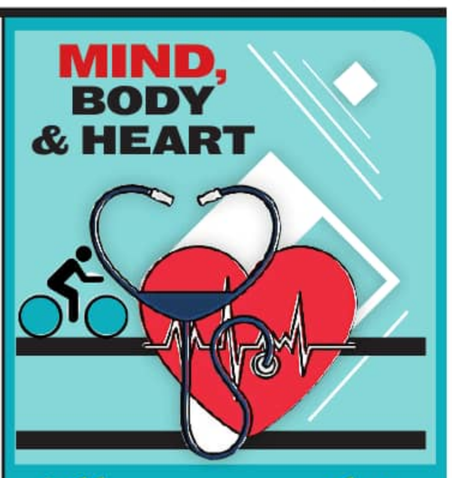
Ethical concerns are equally troubling. This technology echoes historical eugenics movements that promoted selective reproduction and resulted in discrimination, coercion and violence. Choosing embryos based on intelligence or appearance risks reinforcing social inequality and stigma.

Parents may also face overwhelming decision paralysis when confronted with dozens of competing risk scores. Choosing between embryos becomes an impossible moral calculation rather than a medical decision. Some may delay or avoid embryo transfer altogether.

Ironically, couples undergoing IVF solely for polygenic testing may reduce their chance of having a healthy baby. IVF itself carries risks, including pregnancy complications, and embryo biopsy may affect outcomes. Parents may therefore trade known risks for speculative benefits.

The healthiest child is not defined by a genetic score, but by being raised in a loving environment with access to education, nutrition and health care. These factors shape lives far more powerfully than small variations in DNA.

By Alex Polyakov, The University of Melbourne The Conversation



All you need to know about...

Ovarian cancer

Silent but often missed
Ovarian cancer is often called a silent killer because its early symptoms are vague and easily ignored. Bloating, indigestion, fatigue or abdominal discomfort are frequently mistaken for routine health issues. As a result, many women seek medical help only when the disease has reached an advanced stage. Early detection plays a critical role in improving survival rates, making awareness and timely evaluation essential.

Understanding ovarian cancer
Ovarian cancer develops in the ovaries, organs responsible for producing eggs and key hormones such as oestrogen and progesterone. There are three main types: epithelial tumours arising from the outer lining, germ cell tumours originating from egg-producing cells, and stromal tumours developing from hormone-producing tissue.

Who faces higher risk
Although ovarian cancer can affect women of any age, the risk increases after menopause. Family history of ovarian or breast cancer, inherited genetic mutations like BRCA1 and BRCA2, never having been pregnant, and prolonged hormone replacement therapy are known risk factors.

Why detection is difficult
Unlike breast or cervical cancer, ovarian cancer lacks a reliable routine screening test. Early warning signs often mimic digestive or urinary problems. Persistent bloating, pelvic pain, feeling full quickly, frequent urination, bowel changes, unexplained fatigue or weight loss should not be ignored if they last several weeks.

Treatment and survival
When detected early, ovarian cancer is highly treatable. Surgery, chemotherapy, targeted therapy and advanced techniques such as HIPEC have significantly improved outcomes. Awareness remains the strongest defence. —Femina

Your Connect

personal

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Giridhara Karkada S/o Radhakrishna Holla R/o Flat No 001 Municipal No 5(Old No 84) 19th Main Revenue Layout Padmanabhanagar Bengaluru 560070 have changed my name to Giridhar Holla for all purposes

I, Sweta Heerachand Bagrecha D/o Heerachand Amichand Bagrecha R/o 10/1, 4th Floor, New High School Road, PN Residency, VV Puram, Bengaluru - 560004 have changed my name to Sweta Vikas Gulechha for all purposes, vide Affidavit dt 09/02/26 sworn before Advocate and Notary Mamatha. N.K Reg. No. 10201 at Bengaluru

I, SHASHIDHAR CHANDRASEKHAR, resident of No.23/1, Krishna Rao Sindya Road, V.V. Puram, Bangalore-560004, have changed my Minor Daughter name from MEDHA CHANDRASEKHAR SHASHIDHAR (Old Name), to MEDHA SHASHIDHAR (New Name) vide affidavit dated: 6/2/2026 Before Notary R.Basavaraj Bangalore.

I, Naveen Chandrashekar, s/o Chandrashekar Halenahally Nanje Gowda, R/o No-3 17th B Cross 13th Main 5th Phase, J.P Nagar, Bengaluru, 560078, have changed my name to Naveen Halenahally Chandrashekar for all Purposes.

I, Susmita Roy Resident Flat No. C-104, C BLOCK, 1st Floor, Arvind Orchards Apartment, Kodigehalli Main Road, Sahakar Nagar, Bengaluru-560092. Changed My Name from Susmita Moitra To Susmita Roy to all further purposes. (Reference Date of Birth 14/09/1964).

I, SHAILA RATHISH W/o Rathish Chandran R , R/at Golden Paradise-2, Flat No. 203, Gym Road, Horamavu Agara Bengaluru -560043 have changed my name to SHAILA KUTTI KRISHNAPPA vide affidavit dated: 10/2/2026 Before Notary K.V.Mani Bangalore.

I, MADHU GIRI RAJASHANKAR MALLESHWARI residing at No 11/1, Vishwanatha Rao Road, Madhava Nagara, Bangalore – 560009. I have changed my name to MADHU GIRI RAJASHANKAR MALLESWARI. Vide affidavit dated 10/02/2026 sworn before notary V Rangaramu B'lore

I, MD.Danish Rizwan R/o 205 second floor, Lakshya homes apartment, channasandra main road, kadugodi post, Bengaluru 560067 have changed my name to Danish Rizwan.

I, Fayaz Pasha Shafeeq Pasha S/o Fayaz Pasha R/o #322, Dayananda Nagar Siddapura Jayanagar,1st Block B'lore-560011 have changed my name to Shafeeq Pasha.

I, Bi bi Hajira W/o Afzal Pasha R/o #9, Khata no-47/5, Humanity Road Venkoji Rao Khane Mangammamapalya Bommanahalli B'lore have changed my name to Hajira

I, Shanawaz Banu W/o Sardar Pasha R/o #9, Khata no-47/5, Humanity Road Venkoji Rao Khane Mangammamapalya Bommanahalli B'lore have changed my name to Shanawaz

I, Suman Murali W/o Murali Shanker R/o No 26,4th Main Road,S G Palya,C V Raman Nagar,B'luru 560093 have changed my name to Suman L For All Purposes.

I, Suvidha Mudunuri R/o Flat No. L-1051, Block L, NCC Meadows-2, D B Pura Main Road, Puttenahalli, Yelahanka, Bengaluru 560064 changed my name to Suvidha P for all purposes.

I, Manjunath M R/o # No.935 B Sector Yelahanka New Town, near New Town Main Bus Stop Bengaluru 560064, have changed my minor Son name from Daksh Manjunath to Daksh M Arya for all purposes.

I, Keerti Tulashyan R/o Flat no 201 Ds Max Sonata Nest Apartment, Kereguddadahalli Chikkabanavara, Bengaluru 560090 have changed my name to Kirti Poddar for all purposes.

Bennett & Coleman
THE TIMES OF INDIA

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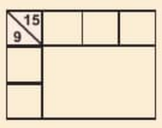
SOLVE IT IN A MINUTE

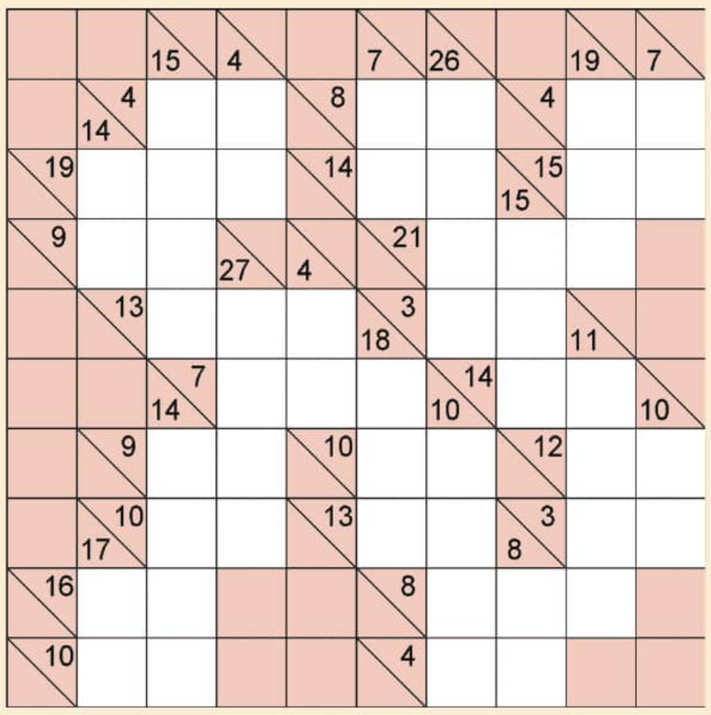
Find the series in which 183 is divided into three parts such that the sum of the first and third is 2 1/20 times the second.

Kakuro

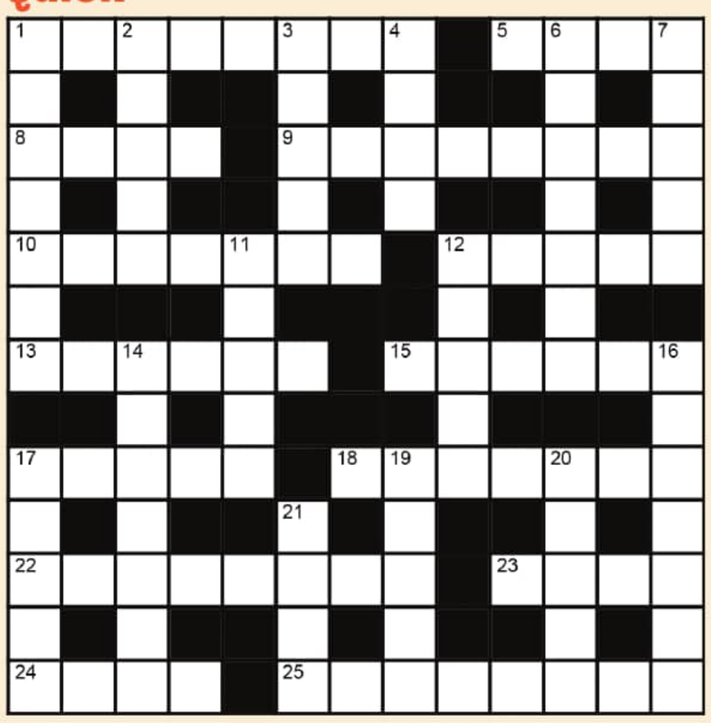
The numbers in the grey squares refer to the sums of the digits that you must fill into the empty spaces directly below or to the right of the grey square containing the number. For instance, in the given example, the 3 boxes horizontally next to 15 must contain 3 digits that add up to 15, whereas for 9, it is the 2 boxes placed vertically under it that must add up to 9. No zeros are used here, only the digits 1 through 9.



Note: A digit cannot appear more than once in any particular digit combination. For instance, in the example, we cannot have the combination of 4+7+4 for 15.



Quick



ACROSS

1 Depressed (8)
5 Television award (4)
8 The game __ __ : you are exposed, in a way? (2,2)
9 Chaos, frenzy or panic (8)
10 Fanatic (7)
12 Barb or prickle (5)
13 Floundered, touched lightly (6)
15 Look out, have a care (6)
17 Gambling game (3-2)
18 Commendation (7)
22 Umbrella alternative (8)
23 Blood-vessel (4)
24 Bangkok buck? (4)
25 Tooth doctors (8)

DOWN

1 Mixed or agitated (7)
2 Asterix's friend Getafix for one? (5)
3 Former India paceman Ashish ___ (5)
4 Popular snack Masala ___ (4)
6 One of Malleshwaram's main streets (7)
7 Long for (5)
11 Move slowly (5)
12 Greek letter (5)
14 Rather rude and uncouth (7)
16 Prolongs or enlarges (7)
17 Beat (5)
19 Show one knows (3,2)
20 Food plans (5)
21 Affectionate (4)

Quoteuncode

This puzzle is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that Q equals C, it will equal C throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Today's CLUE: X EQUALS G

OKOJUAVBHX OYBCABHX BH AVO SHBKOJCO BC AVO QJSBA DQ TVPHTO PHR HOTOCCBAU.

Linemaro

I am not a photographer, but I can picture us together

Mindchow

War is delightful to those who have had no experience of it

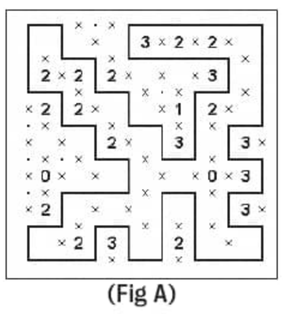
Joke of the day

The quickest way to a man's heart really is through his stomach, because then you don't have to chop through that pesky rib cage

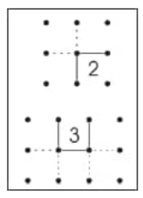
Loop

Rules

» Connect adjacent dots with vertical or horizontal lines, creating a single loop (Fig A). » Crossovers or branches are not allowed (As shown by dotted lines in Fig B). » Numbers in the puzzle indicate the number of lines that should surround it, while empty cells may be surrounded by any number of lines. » You can't draw lines around zeros. » Each puzzle has just one unique solution.



(Fig A)

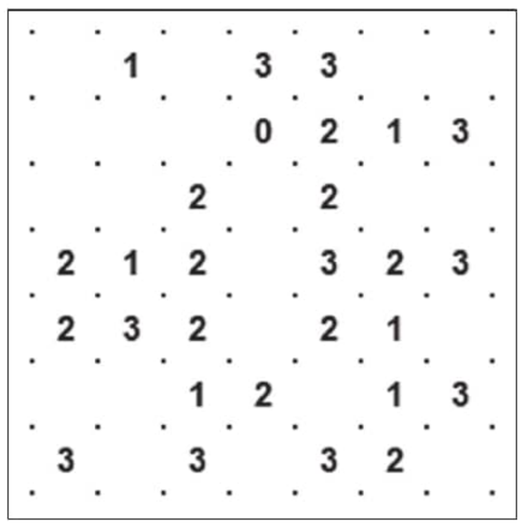


(Fig B) Not Allowed

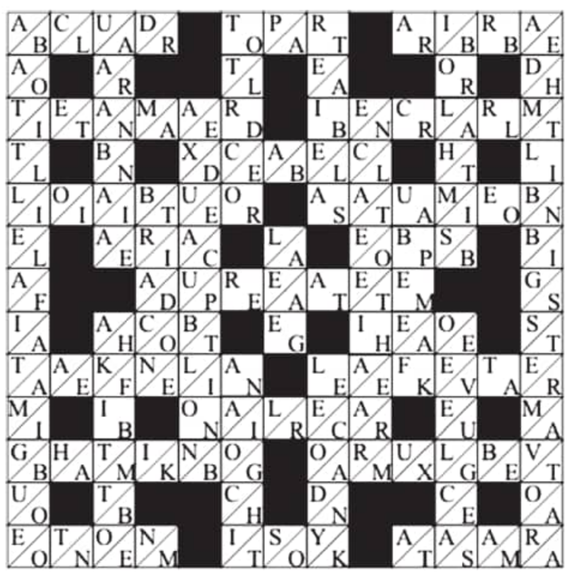
How to begin:

Example (Fig A) – Begin with the zero next to 3. Since no lines can be drawn around zero, mark crosses around it, as shown. Now there is a cross in one space around 3. So we know the three lines of 3 can only be drawn in the remaining three spaces. Next, these lines can only be extended in one direction each. Continue, using the same logic.

Hints: Keep eliminating possibilities by marking crosses in spaces between dots where a line isn't possible, i.e., if you have already completed required lines or where a line extension may create a branch or cause a dead-end (Fig B)



Strikeout



This crossword has no clues and the answer is there waiting for you. All you have to do is find it in each square. You have a choice of two letters, one of which you must strike out. If you choose correctly, you will be left with a grid that contains real words.

Fast five

How long do you think it will take you to unscramble the ten words shown below and fit them correctly into the grid in the order given one letter has already been entered to get you started? on your marks, get set...

1	2	3	4	5
6		M		
7				
8				
9				

ACROSS

1 Rig at; 6 Mo hic; 7 No pig; 8 Ion in; 9 Tacos

DOWN

1 Optic; 2 Hi Ron; 3 Amain; 4 Go git; 5 Scion

Mensapuzzle

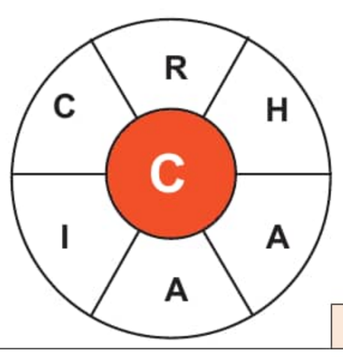
Which letter logically completes the last box of letters?

H	X	O
Q	A	J

Z	R	K
F	N	U

S	G	D
A	M	

Bull's eye



How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown? Every word must contain the central letter. There should be one seven-letter word. British English Dictionary is used as a reference.

04 Average; **05** Good; **07** Outstanding

SudokuChallenge

1		3	7		6	8		5
8				1				6
		9				2		
	7			8			9	
3			4		2			1
	1			5			8	
		2				1		
6				2				9
4		1	6		9	5		7

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from one to nine must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Gofigure

Place the four numbers in the first, third, fifth, and seventh boxes and whatever operators you care to use in the second, fourth, and sixth boxes in the correct order to get the answer. Use the numbers only once.

Easy = 9

3 4 8 8

Medium = 3

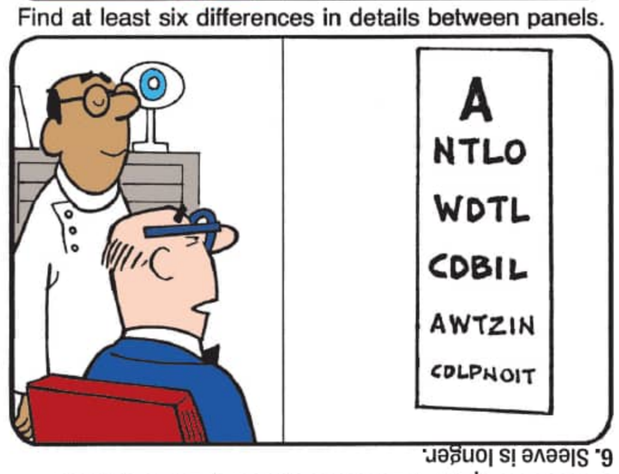
2 4 5 8

Hard = 5

1 5 6 7

Hocusfocus

Find at least six differences in details between panels.



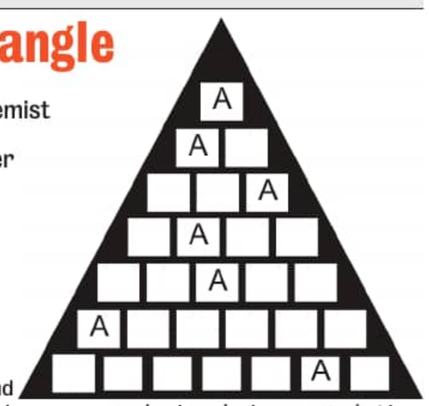
Differences: 1. Letter is different. 2. Chart is moved. 3. Mouth is open. 4. Button is added. 5. Ear is smaller. 6. Sleeve is longer.

Riddler

Four of us are in your field But our differences keep us at yield First, a one that is no fool Though he resembles a gardener's tool Next, one difficult to split in two And a girl once had one as big as her shoe Then, to the mind, one's a lovely bonder And truancy makes it grow fonder Last, a stem connecting dots of three Knowing all this, what are we?

Alpha triangle

1 Blood gr.
2 Silver for the chemist
3 Gazelle
4 Othello's betrayer
5 Adult insect
6 Mexican buddies
7 A line on a map



Beginning at the top move towards the bottom seven-letter word by adding a letter at each step and rearranging. A correct and different word must be made at each step answering to the clue given.

DIFFICULT TO SOLVE? FIND THESE SOLUTIONS ON THE NEXT PAGE

COMICS

Popeye

WHERE IS POPEYE? I WANT TO GO HOME!
THE KING JAILED HIM FOR TRYING TO BREAK YOUR ROYAL ENGAGEMENT!
I'M NOT MARRYING THE KING! QUEENS IN THIS COUNTRY ARE NOTHING BUT SLAVES!
I FEAR YOU ARE IN TROUBLE! IT IS CONSIDERED TREASON TO BREAK AN ENGAGEMENT TO THE KING!
IF YOU CONTINUE YOU'LL END UP IN JAIL!
PHOOEY!
popeye.com
5-13

Bizarrotrip

Your settlement proposal has to be more precise than "ex amount."
Dist. by King Features
Wayno & Piraro 11-1-25
BIZARRO.COM
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Diamond Lil

Hart of the city

LAST CHAIN LETTER DROPPED OFF. I CAN GRAB MY BOOKS AND GO HOME. I'M FREE.
NO...
NO!!!
I WAS FINISHED!!!!
HEART OF THE CITY © 2025 ANDREWS MCMEEL
@OCOMICS.COM/HEARTOFTHECITY

Crankshaft

OUR SECURITY CAMERA IN THE MAIN DINING ROOM SHOULD ENABLE US TO SEE THE PIZZA MONSTER EATING LUNCH!
MONTONI'S
BOO!
WE'RE FINALLY GOING TO SEE WHO THE PIZZA MONSTER IS!
SHOOT!
BATIUK & DAVIS
tombatiuk.com/books
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Mutts

WRITTEN IN THE STARS

DR SUNDEEP KOCHAR

If it's your birthday today

This year invites you to rethink your professional direction. A career pivot in May brings unexpected joy and financial stability. Love requires patience but rewards you with deep, lasting commitment. Your domestic environment benefits from de-cluttering and fresh energy. Exotic travel destinations call you late in the year. Prioritise self-care to keep your physical vitality at peak.

Aries Mar 21 – Apr 20
Your energy levels are high, making it a great day for physical activity. Exercise will not only boost your health but also provide the mental clarity you need for success.

Taurus Apr 21 – May 20
Patience pays off today as you see the results of your long-term efforts. Stay committed to your path, knowing that your persistence is leading you toward a very bright future.

Gemini May 21 – Jun 21
Networking leads to an exciting new opportunity today. Be open to meeting new people and sharing your professional goals, as a chance encounter could change your career path for better.

Cancer Jun 22 – July 23
Focus on self-reflection today to gain a better understanding of your life's direction. This quiet time will provide the answers you've been seeking and help you move forward confidently.

Leo Jul 24 – Aug 23
Your creativity is rewarded today with recognition from your peers. Celebrate your unique talents and continue to shine brightly, as your artistic contributions are truly valuable to the whole world.

Virgo Aug 24 – Sep 23
Organization brings you a sense of calm today. By tidying your work space and planning your schedule, you will feel more in control and ready to take on any new challenges.

Libra Sep 24 – Oct 22
Harmony in your relationships is restored today through open and honest communication. Speaking your truth with kindness will help you and your loved ones reach a new level of understanding.

Scorpio Oct 23 – Nov 22
Financial intuition is strong today, guiding you toward profitable decisions. Trust your gut when it comes to money matters, and you will see your resources grow in a very steady.

Sagittarius Nov 23 – Dec 22
Your thirst for knowledge is highlighted today. Engaging in a new course or hobby will bring you great satisfaction and help you develop skills that will benefit your future career.

Capricorn Dec 23 – Jan 20
Stability at home allows you to focus more effectively on your professional goals today. Knowing you have a supportive foundation gives you the confidence to excel in all your endeavours.

Aquarius Jan 21 – Feb 19
Your social circle expands today as you meet like-minded individuals. These new friendships will provide inspiration and support, helping you stay motivated on your path toward achieving your dreams.

Pisces Feb 20 – Mar 20
Intuition guides your creative projects today, leading to beautiful and unique results. Trust your inner voice and let your imagination flow freely; your artistic vision is truly one of a kind.

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Roshan, Bengaluru

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SOLUTIONS

SOLVE IN 1M Let first and second parts be x and y
Third part =183-(x+y)
x+183-x-y = 41y/20
>183-y = 41y/20
> 41y = 3660-20y
> 41y+20y = 3660
> 61y = 3660
> y = 3660÷61 = 60
Therefore the parts are 61, 60, 62

RIDDLER
The Four Suits In a Deck of Standard Playing Cards

C	O	A	T	S
I	N	I	O	N
P	I	N	G	O
O	H	M	I	C
T	R	A	G	I

FAST FIVE

BULL'S EYE
arch, ARCHAIC, chair, char, chic, circa, rich

STRIKE OUT

B	L	U	R	■	O	P	T	■	A	B	B	A	■	■
A	■	■	■	L	■	A	■	R	■	■	■	D	■	■
T	E	A	M	E	D	■	B	E	C	A	L	M	■	■
T	■	N	■	X	E	B	E	C	■	H	■	I	■	■
L	O	I	T	E	R	■	S	T	A	M	E	N	■	■
E	■	A	R	C	■	L	■	O	P	S	■	I	■	■
F	■	A	U	R	E	A	T	E	■	S	■	■	■	■
A	■	A	C	T	■	G	■	H	A	O	■	T	■	■
T	A	K	E	I	N	■	L	E	K	V	A	R	■	■
I	■	I	■	O	I	L	E	R	■	U	■	A	■	■
G	A	M	I	N	G	■	A	M	U	L	E	T	■	■
U	■	B	■	H	■	D	■	■	E	■	O	■	■	■
E	T	O	N	■	T	O	Y	■	T	S	A	R	■	■

QUICK

S	A	D	D	E	N	E	D	■	E	M	M	Y	■	■
T	■	R	■	■	■	E	■	■	■	A	■	E	■	■
I	S	U	P	■	H	Y	S	T	E	R	I	A	■	■
R	■	I	■	■	R	■	A	■	■	G	■	R	■	■
R	A	D	I	C	A	L	■	T	H	O	R	N	■	■
E	■	■	■	■	R	■	■	■	■	S	■	■	■	■
D	A	B	B	E	D	■	B	E	W	A	R	E	■	■
T	W	O	U	P	■	E	■	■	■	T	■	X	■	■
H	■	R	■	■	F	■	■	P	L	A	U	D	I	T
E	■	I	■	■	E	■	■	■	V	E	I	N	■	■
R	A	I	N	C	O	A	T	■	■	■	■	D	■	■
O	■	S	■	■	N	■	O	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
B	A	H	T	■	D	E	N	T	I	S	T	S	■	■

MENSA PUZZLE
P, in each diagram, the numerical value of each letter plus the numerical value of the letter below it adds up to the same number.

QUOTE UNCODE
Everything existing in the universe is the fruit of chance and necessity.

SUDOKU

1	2	3	7	9	6	8	4	5
8	4	5	2	1	3	9	7	6
7	6	9	8	4	5	2	1	3
5	7	4	3	8	1	6	9	2
3	9	8	4	6	2	7	5	1
2	1	6	9	5	7	3	8	4
9	3	2	5	7	4	1	6	8
6	5	7	1	2	8	4	3	9
4	8	1	6	3	9	5	2	7

ALPHA TRIANGLE
A, Ag, Goa, Iago, Imago, Amigos, Isogram.

GO FIGURE
Easy
8 - 4 - 3 + 8 = 9
Medium
4 + 5 - 8 + 2 = 3
Hard
7 - 6 x 5 x 1 = 5

LOOP

KAKURO

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 # Hindu values parenting
Nick Jonas says Hindu values, fatherhood and daughter Malti shape his spirituality, worldview and music

Shilpa Shetty on parenting

Actor calls on parents to raise aware, not addicted, children

Actress Shilpa Shetty has spoken candidly about the growing need to raise digitally aware children rather than digitally addicted ones, urging parents to take a more balanced and conscious approach to their children's online exposure.

Marking Safer Internet Day, Shilpa shared a heartfelt video on Instagram, clarifying that her message came not from her identity as a public figure, but as a concerned mother of two. She highlighted how the internet, while being a powerful tool for learning and creativity, also carries risks that young minds may not be emotionally equipped to handle.

"The internet is a powerful teacher and a playground for creativity," she said, adding that with its advantages come serious challenges. According to her, parents should not respond by banning technology outright, but by regulating access and exposure thoughtfully. "Our role isn't to simply ban technology; it's to balance access and exposure," she explained.

Shilpa stressed that children must be taught early on that not everything online is real, kind, or safe. She encouraged parents to actively stay aware of what their children are watching, scrolling through, and consuming online. Open communication, she said, is key. "Curiosity grows in silence, not in conversation," she noted, urging parents to talk openly rather than avoid uncomfortable topics.

> "Our role isn't to ban technology; it's to balance access and exposure

While acknowledging the usefulness of parental controls, Shilpa emphasized that trust matters more than restriction. She described supervision up to the age of 16 not as control, but as care. "Guidance today creates confidence tomorrow," she said, underlining the long-term impact of mindful parenting.

Admitting that she doesn't have all the answers, Shilpa expressed hope that starting honest conversations could lead to collective change. Admitting she lacks answers, Shilpa urges collective parenting to raiise aware chidren responsibly together for healthier future. —ETimes

Mrunal sets boundaries

Actor Mrunal Thakur has always been clear about one thing she strongly believes in nazar (the evil eye), and that belief shapes how much of her personal and professional life she shares publicly. Even amid recent rumours linking her to Tamil actor-producer Dhanush, Mrunal has chosen restraint over clarification, sharing little and staying focused on her work.

In an earlier interaction with Instant Bollywood, the Sita Ramam star explained why she consciously avoids talking about future plans. She said there are many goals she still wants to achieve in her career, but prefers to speak about them only after they materialise. According to Mrunal, discussing plans prematurely often leads to self-jinxing. "I believe the whole nazar thing bohot nazar lagti hai," she remarked, adding that silence gives her peace and focus.

Mrunal maintains privacy, readies Feburary releases.
—ETimes

Marc on the Beckhams

Famed musician Marc Anthony has finally addressed the much-publicised feud within the Beckham family, offering a rare glimpse into what he believes is happening behind the scenes. Speaking in a recent interview with The Hollywood Reporter, the 57-year-old singer, who has been a close family friend for decades, chose his words carefully while reacting to the strained relationship between Brooklyn Beckham, his wife Nicola Peltz, and the rest of the Beckham clan.

Anthony made it clear that he did not wish to comment directly on the family conflict. However, he emphasised his long-standing bond with the Beckhams, noting that he has known them since before their children were born and is even godfather to Cruz Beckham. While maintaining discretion, he acknowledged that the situation has been unfortunate for everyone involved, adding that the way events are being portrayed publicly is "hardly the truth."

His remarks come weeks after Brooklyn shared emotional social media posts alleging long-standing issues with his parents, stating that distancing himself from his family helped ease years of anxiety. Brooklyn also expressed his desire for a private life focused on peace and happiness with Nicola.

The rift began at Brooklyn and Nicola's wedding, with tensions involving David and Victoria Beckham continuing. —ETimes

Dad's journey

Actor Ranbir Kapoor has once again opened up about how fatherhood has transformed him, offering candid insights into his relationship with his late father Rishi Kapoor and how he hopes to parent his daughter, Raha, differently. His comments come shortly after his wife Alia Bhatt spoke about the visible changes she has seen in Ranbir since they became parents.

Speaking in a video shared on the Ranbir Kapoor Kingdom YouTube channel during the announcement of his association as a brand ambassador for a leading jewellery brand, Ranbir reflected on generational shifts in parenting. He described his relationship with Rishi Kapoor as respectful but emotionally distant, shaped by the norms of that era. "There was a glass wall," he said, explaining that he now wants to break that barrier with Raha by being approachable, supportive, and encouraging her independence and choices.

Ranbir also addressed the responsibility of carrying forward the Kapoor legacy while staying true to himself. Ranbir reunites with Alia in Love & War, readies for Ramayana Part 1 next.
—ETimes

SANDALWOOD SHOTS
Y MAHESWARA REDDY

Bigg Boss winner debut

The Kannada film Super Hit, starring Gilli Nata and Swetha, is set to release in theatres across Karnataka on February 27. The release date was officially announced on Monday with the unveiling of the film's teaser at MMB Legacy.

Directed by Vijayanand, brother of lyricist-director Dr V Nagendra Prasad, the film marks a significant step for the team. Vijayanand thanked debut producer G Umesh for providing full support during the shoot, expressing confidence that the film's engaging content would appeal to a wide audience. He also revealed that the movie's digital streaming rights have already been sold to an OTT platform for a good price.

Producer Umesh, making his Sandalwood debut with Super Hit, urged audiences to support his first venture by watching it in theatres. The film features an important role by Sadhu Kokila, who advised the team to focus strongly on promotions, calling publicity crucial for success.Team cautions Gilli over promotions.

February 30 unveiled

The trailer of the Kannada film February 30 was unveiled on Tuesday at MMB Legacy, marking the first major promotional milestone for the project. Directed by Prashanth ML from Mysuru, the film is backed by producer Joseph Baby under the Shankar Movies International banner. The cast includes Abhishek Srikanth, Sahitya Shetty, Akshay, Manoj, and Shivakumar.

Speaking at the launch, director Prashanth said the film began as a short-film idea while he was working in a software company, but the strength of the script encouraged him to develop it into a full-length psychological thriller. He added that the unusual title would make complete sense once audiences watch the film in theatres. Actor Abhishek Srikanth described the project as his first horror outing and said the narration initially left him intrigued and slightly confused, which later turned into excitement. He also praised the producer for supporting the project. Shot over 17 days, spanning Kerala and Mysuru, the five-friends story targets youth storytelling.